

Date: December 21, 2021

Re: 2022 Legislative Session – Policies and Procedures

I. Testing of House Members and Staff Prior to Session

Members of the House must get tested prior to Session beginning either on January 5th at the Capitol or, if testing on your own, no sooner than Friday, January 7th. A member who tests on his or her own between January 7th and January 10th must report the results of the test to Human Resources Director, Donald Cronin, prior to the convening of the Regular Session. House staff will be required to be tested for COVID-19 prior to the start of the 2022 Legislative Session on January 5th at the State Capitol. The Speaker of the House has the authority to remove from the House Chamber and House Gallery, any individual, Member or otherwise, who refuses to comply with the testing requirement.

If a Member or House staff tests positive for COVID-19, he or she should report that positive test to the Human Resources Office and not come to or return to the Capitol but rather should follow the guidelines issued by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If a Member or House staff begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19, he or she should notify the Human Resources Office and not come to or return to the Capitol until he or she has visited a doctor and received clearance to return.

II. Health of Members During Session

A. Health Monitoring During Session:

Upon the convening of the 2022 Legislative Session on January 10th, Members of the House should monitor their health daily.

In the event that a Member experiences any of the following symptoms, they should not attend the 2022 Legislative Session until they have visited a doctor and received clearance to return:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

In the event that a Member experiences any of these symptoms after the start of the 2022 Legislative Session, he or she should immediately leave the Capitol Complex (if present there) and should not return to the Capitol Complex until they have visited a doctor and received clearance to return.

B. Masks:

Masks must be worn by Members and House staff when in the House Chamber and Gallery. The Speaker of the House has the authority to remove from the House Chamber and House Gallery, any individual, Member or otherwise, who refuses to comply with the mask requirement. *Masks shall comply with House Rules 1.4 and 1.9.*

III. Committee Procedures

A. Committee Rooms:

Masks must be worn by Members, House staff, and members of the public who enter House committee rooms. Committee rooms will operate with full seating.

Committee rooms will have software for Zoom installed on the computers in the rooms to allow for interactivity for Members or other committee hearing participants who are participating in committee meetings virtually. These participants will also be shown on the projection screens in the committee rooms to allow for further transparency.

B. Committee Meetings:

House committee meetings will continue to be live-streamed, as they typically are, and Members will continue to be able to access those live-streams from their offices. House Media Services will also live-stream House sub-committee meetings, provided that such meetings take place in meeting rooms with streaming technology in place. House Media Services will continue to provide support for conducting committee meetings over Zoom.

Committee chairmen will allow active participation (including voting) by Members in committee meetings via Zoom in rooms that have the capability. It is the responsibility of Members to notify their committee chairmen at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the committee meeting if they wish to participate in a committee meeting virtually. Members who participate virtually should not have any signage in the background that would violate House Rules. Committee chairmen should make every effort to provide for receiving public commentary and having it entered into the committee record when a meeting is conducted via Zoom.

Committee chairmen are encouraged, where possible, to schedule committee meetings as far in advance as practicable to allow for House Media Services to adequately staff the physical components of the committee meetings.

For in-person committee meetings, everyone in House committee rooms must wear masks. Attendee lists (including the name, address, email address, and phone number for each individual) should be kept of who attends committee meetings in person, including members of the public, to allow for contact tracing in the event that an individual who attends a committee meeting in-person tests positive for COVID-19.

For each in-person committee meeting, the administrative aide for the committee chair should provide their name and contact information in the posted notification or agenda of the meeting and instruct in-person attendees to email the administrative aide

their name, address, phone number, and email address and that they intend to attend the meeting for contact tracing purposes. Additionally, at each in-person committee meeting, a notice should be shown on the screens in the committee room informing attendees of the name and email address of the administrative aide to the committee chair and that they should email their name, address, phone number, and email address to the administrative aide for contact tracing purposes. A similar notice should be included with any agendas distributed at the committee meeting. Each committee chair should also make an announcement at the beginning and end of each committee meeting sharing the same information.

IV. Chamber Proceedings

A. Voting:

Members are required to notify the Clerk of the House if a Member wishes to be “Excused” from a specific vote or for an entire day of the 2022 Legislative Session. The Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives has purchased tablets for the use of the Members who will be seated in the Gallery. Each Member seated in these areas will be assigned a tablet that will be programmed specifically for them. These tablets will allow members to (1) register their votes on bills or other questions on the floor, (2) see the vote board on their tablet, and (3) request to speak, when appropriate and in accordance with House Rules.

Voting tablets are to remain at the Member’s seat at all times. Under no circumstances should the voting tablets be removed by a Member from the House Gallery. House rules requiring that a Member must vote their own machine will be in effect as it relates to tablets. A Member assigned to the House Gallery will not be able to cast their vote by telling a staff member of the Clerk’s Office. They must cast their vote from their tablet in their assigned seat.

B. Members Speaking:

In the event that a Member sitting in the House Gallery wishes to speak, in a time frame in accordance with House Rules, he or she should use his or her assigned tablet to press the “RTS” button. In the event that a Member wishes to speak to a bill, present a morning order, or share an announcement with the Chamber, the Member should follow the standard procedure to sign up with the House Messenger. Members seated in the House Chamber should follow standard procedures, in accordance with House Rules, to speak.

C. Access to the Chamber and Anterooms:

There will not be a “rope line” set up outside the Chamber doors as there has been previously. Instead, the area outside of the Chamber doors and the area outside of the doors of the Gallery will only be accessible to Members and staff who have floor access. The South Anteroom will not be accessible to the public. Access to the House Gallery will be treated in the same manner as access to the House floor.

V. Members' Offices and Staff

A. Office Protocols:

Personal aides and staff not paid by the Georgia House of Representatives **will not** be allowed to work in House office space at this time. Should a Member have a personal aide or “chief of staff”, they must work remotely or from public spaces in the Capitol building. Members, staff, and visitors should follow the current guidelines of the CDC as it pertains to the wearing of face coverings. Appointments are not required before entry into an office, but are permitted, if desired by the office.

B. Food in the Capitol:

1. Individual Offices

Members should not host meals in their office space for individuals other than the staff in that particular office suite. In the event that a meal is provided in an office suite, the meals should not be served buffet-style or out of open containers but rather should consist of individually wrapped or individually portioned food in closed containers.

2. Anteroom and Chamber (including House Gallery)

In the event that food is provided in the Anteroom or left on the desks of Members, all items should be individually wrapped. Other than while actively eating or drinking, Members and House staff should keep their masks on in the presence of others.

VI. Meeting Spaces for Outside Groups

As during the 2022 Regular Session, meetings spaces and rooms cannot be reserved for use by outside groups.

VII. Guidance for Employees

Please read the included “Employee Guidance” document.

“EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE”

Requirements for Employees Reporting to the Capitol

Prior to Reporting to Work Today:

Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If so, immediately notify your supervisor before heading to work. If any symptom occurs during the day, immediately notify your supervisor. If you have recently been in contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, immediately notify your supervisor. You are required to test on each scheduled testing day during the Special Session.

In the Office:

- Wash hands with hot water and soap for 20 seconds often, immediately prior to and after eating; after using the restroom; after sneezing or coughing; prior to and after removing a face covering; and prior to leaving the Capitol Complex. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Utilize communication methods other than face to face as often as possible
- Follow the CDC guidelines as it pertains to the wearing of a face covering
- Keep a log of everyone who enters your office and the length of time they are there
- No temporary staff, so no personal intern or aide can work in the office
- Clean often touched surfaces as often as possible

Any Time You are Not in Your Office:

- Wear your face covering according to the current CDC guidelines
- Wash hands upon return

Face Covering Requirements:

Cloth face coverings should (1) be made of a material that is not transparent and through which light cannot be seen, (2) allow for breathing without restriction, (3) cover the nose and mouth, and (4) be laundered and machine dried after each use. For further information on creating homemade cloth face covering, the CDC website has [instructions](#)